

Remember Me

CSI buys new aircraft, installs high-tech medical systems

By Kevin Robinson-Avila / Journal Staff Writer

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Medical flight personnel assist a patient on CSI Aviation's Beachcraft 300 plane at the Albuquerque International Sunport, where the aviation company is headquartered. (Courtesy of CSI Aviation) CSI Aviation Inc. has coordinated medical flights for providers and patients for more than a decade, but it's now directly operating its own medical aircraft in partnership with Albuquerque Ambulance Service.

Albuquerque-based CSI, a 37-year-old company that offers charter flights, aircraft leasing, management services and more for businesses and government agencies, began offering medical flight coordination in 2004. It arranges all logistics for transporting critically injured and ill patients to and from hospitals in New Mexico and the Southwest. But until now, those flights were on third-party aircraft piloted by others.

Two years ago, CSI acquired its own King Air Beachcraft-200, a high-performance, twin-engine turboprop plane. In June, it bought an additional King Air B-300. It upgraded both planes for medical flight specialty service, equipping them with critical care medical systems.

This month, CSI received New Mexico Department of Health certification for critical and specialty care flight missions, allowing it to directly offer those services for providers and patients 24/7, said Marc Ramthun, CSI senior director of sales.

“Since 2004, we’ve provided aviation logistics with medical services on charter flights,” Ramthun said. “Now, we’re launching our own medical flight services with our own aircraft here in Albuquerque. We can now provide special care flight services anywhere in the state in less than one hour.”

The aviation company signed a partnership agreement with Albuquerque Ambulance Service, which will provide critical care medical teams for all CSI medical flights, while managing all ground transportation services to and from hospitals and clinics.

The ambulance company, a division of Presbyterian Healthcare Services, has served the greater Albuquerque metropolitan area and Bernalillo County since 1972. It manages more than 120,000 calls per year with a team of 350 people, said Albuquerque Ambulance chief Kurt Krumperman.

“We’re proud to partner with CSI,” Krumperman said. “... Our geographic coverage is in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, but we do go throughout the state to pick up or drop off patients. Through this partnership, we’ll get much further out a lot more often.”

CSI generally concentrates on medical flights in New Mexico and surrounding states, but it will offer services throughout the Southwest and beyond as needed, Ramthun said.

The partnership provides a complete turnkey solution for customers.

“We compliment each other,” Ramthun said. “Albuquerque Ambulance will provide trained flight crews with on-board medics and nurses, and CSI provides the pilots and all flight personnel.”

CSI was formed in 1979 by Allen Weh, former chairman of the New Mexico Republican Party and a former candidate for the U.S. Senate.

The company employs 40 people in Albuquerque, many of whom are veterans who served in all four branches of the military, including combat medics, medevac pilots and flight operations specialists.